

AIR POUCH JUL 14 1955

CONFIDENTIAL

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM AMEMBASSY, HELSINKI

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DESP. NO.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

July 13, 1955
DATE

REF

EUR INDEX
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4✓ For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	OTHER
	7/16	CIA-7 Army-3 Navy-3 Air-3 OSD-4 USA-4

SUBJECT: Finnish Editorial Advocating Return of Porkkala

There is attached a translation of an editorial which appeared in "Helsingin Sanomat" for July 13, 1955. The paper suggests that this would be an appropriate time for the Soviet Union to consider, in its own interest, the return of the leased area of Porkkala to Finland.

Without yet being aware to what comment and exchanges of views this article may give rise, the Embassy is inclined to regard the editorial as both bold and shrewd: bold, because it deals directly and forthrightly with a political relationship between Finland and the Soviet Union; and shrewd, because it presents as being of possible psychological advantage to the Soviet Union a move on the part of that nation which could not fail to be welcomed by all Finns. From our own point of view it is perhaps a little unwelcome that this action should be advocated on the ground that the Soviet Union might, by carrying it out, improve its moral position vis-a-vis the western world with regard to the general case of military bases held within the territory of another state; but even here the paper, a friendly one, makes a distinction between Porkkala and such bases as "have been established in mutual understanding with the country concerned, possibly at its actual request."

For the Ambassador:

H. Bartlett Wells

H. Bartlett Wells
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure:

Translation from "Helsingin Sanomat"

CC: Amembassy, Bern

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC:MR

REVIEWED ☒ EXT. DATE ☒ REASON(S) ☒

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The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

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(Classification)

TRANSLATION

(from "Helsingin Sanomat", July 13, 1955)

P O R K K A L A

At the Geneva conference, the heads of the governments of the Great Powers can without any advance notice take up any questions the settlement of which may be considered to be of importance to the alleviation of tension and to the fortification of a stronger atmosphere of peace in the world. The United States is expected to take up, in one form or another, the question of the satellite countries. Whatever the reaction of the Russians may be - and it may be very pronounced - it is of importance that they now gradually dare to touch upon such questions as this, which until now have been proclaimed untouchable. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, is expected to call on the United States to destroy its network of bases, which extends all over the world. There is an indefinite number of these bases, and the Soviet Union feels itself to be blockaded by them on all sides.

It can, of course, be contended that the satellite countries are, as such, military bases of the Soviet Union. Yet since the Soviet Union returned Port Arthur to China, it now actually has only one separate military base situated on the territory of a foreign independent country, viz. the base of Porkkala, right to the west of Helsinki. This base belongs to a category of its own, since it is situated within the range of an ordinary field gun from the capital of Finland and stands athwart its natural sea and land connections with the West. We know that there are two kinds of bases. Some have been established in mutual understanding with the country concerned, possibly at its actual request. Others have been established contrary to the wishes of the country concerned, through the right of the stronger and usually after a war. Porkkala belongs to the latter category. The fact that it was placed close to our capital reflects the Soviet Union's wartime feelings towards our country. The base was to humiliate us and to keep us in perpetual fear. For the mere purpose of controlling the narrows of the Gulf of Finland it would not have been necessary to draw its boundaries in the way they were drawn.

Now that the Soviet Union is pursuing toward Finland a policy of friendship and Finland, for its own part, is doing its best to strengthen good and trusting relations between the two countries, the existence of the Porkkala base, and particularly its geographic boundaries, are not in accord with political realities. On the contrary, the contrast is most glaring. So far as is known, increasing attention has recently been paid to this state of affairs in diplomatic circles. Most recently, during the Hanko regatta it became clear also to the foreign spectators of the races, and certainly even to the Russian participants, what an unnatural obstacle to the sea connections of the coast of Finland the Porkkala area constitutes. The situation is detrimental to an independent country, and we do not believe that it is any advertisement for the Soviet Union, either. The moral position of the Soviet Union would be totally different if it did not bear the burden of Porkkala at the moment when it demands in an international arena, the dismantling of the network of bases.

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